

Housing Development Work Group

June 19, 2006 2:00 – 4:00

**Next meeting: July 11, 2006 2:00 – 4:00 pm Location: Pavilion
Building, 4th floor Conference Room
Montpelier, Vermont**

Present: Ken Liberto, VAMH, chair
Claude Arsenault, WCMHS
JoAnn Troiano, Montpelier Housing Authority
Jeff Rothenberg, CMC
Graham Parker, HCRS
Cathy Voyer, AHS-Housing & Transportation
Hillary Cole, CMC/Safe Haven
Linda Corey, VPS

Guests: Morgan W. Brown

Staff: Briam M. Smith, VDH/DMH
Judy Rosenstreich, VDH/DMH

Ken welcomed the group, underscoring the critical need for housing resources in the context of the Futures Plan. He noted the group's collective expertise given the knowledge and experience of those assembled. Ken reminded the group that we are aiming for a report and recommendations that will enable us to effectively advocate for programmatic and/or funding initiatives in time for the state's 2008 budget cycle, a process that begins in the fall of 2007 when the Governor's budget proposals are developed. The last of the four meetings that we have scheduled is September 26, three weeks prior to the Futures Advisory Committee meeting on October 16 and a full month before the Vermont Association for Mental Health annual meeting on October 30. This will enable the Housing Development Work Group to present its findings to the Advisory Committee in mid-October and to bring a report and recommendations to the mental health community attending the VAMH annual meeting at the end of the month.

Introductions and Roundtable Discussion

Ken asked participants to introduce themselves and to comment on their priorities and questions.

Graham Parker was a Housing and Residential Coordinator before his current role as CRT Director at HCRS. He felt that the lack of availability of housing is causing

pressures (jamming up) on crisis beds and group homes as the housing market continues to become tighter.

Cathy Voyer is the Housing and Transportation Director for the Agency of Human Services. She also chairs the Interagency Council on Homelessness. She suggested that we document all available housing resources, in addition to the Housing Contingency Fund, citing Section 8 as an example.

Morgan Brown shared his experiences with homelessness. He asked if there are any funds that could be used to leverage federal funds. He mentioned the Vermont Housing Council as an important partner. Morgan advocated housing *first*---without packaging the housing with care and/or supportive services that may not be needed or desired.

Brian Smith serves as Housing Administrator for VDH/Division of Mental Health. He pointed out the significance of the \$90,000 added by the legislature to the DMH budget for the Housing Contingency Fund, *the first increase since 1988 when the fund was established at \$300,000*, during a period when fair market housing costs have risen substantially. Brian also referred to the Statewide Consolidated Plan that guides funding.

Jeff Rothenberg, CRT Director for Clara Martin Center, identified four types of housing for consideration:

1. Housing Contingency Fund (rental assistance)
2. Permanent housing
 - a. Permanent independent
 - b. Permanent with transitional supports
 - c. Permanent with ongoing supports
3. Transitional housing
4. Community care homes / residential group homes
5. Supportive services within affordable housing (added by Cathy Voyer)

Jeff asked how the Governor's housing affordability plan relates to the work of this group.

Claude Arsenault is Housing Program Manager for Washington County Mental Health. He manages the Shelter + Care Program, a program combining rental subsidy with supportive services.

Linda Corey is Executive Director of Vermont Psychiatric Survivors. Linda stated that people recently out of VSH need support with simple skills to help them keep up their apartments. Good idea to look at their strengths, and assess what help they need such as cleaning. An issue is if they can have that service without having to accept other services. By helping them to learn dishwashing and other specialized skills, Safe Haven helps them to stay in their housing unit. The packaging of services is not necessarily helpful.

Ken asked how much *permanent* housing is there?

A VSH discharge plan is based on a person's strengths and also an assessment of their level of stability and instability.

Brian stated the need for housing for someone with SSI income is the highest level of need in the state. He spoke of a survey.

There was interest in possibly undertaking a survey to establish a baseline of information, perhaps focusing not only on the population currently at VSH over the last 3 years but also on other people not at VSH who are out in the community. What are the trends in the community?

Joann Troiano thought the group was organized to consider what to do when VSH closes and new inpatient and community programs begin.

Ken's \$1 Million Dollar Question

Designed in part to help determine the housing priorities of the group, Ken invited everyone to identify where they would put \$1 million if given the opportunity.

NAME	HOUSING PRIORITIES
Linda Corey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Personal choice needed✓ Working with peers...What would they like to see happen?✓ Recovery: People able to make choices, take control of their life✓ Individual could be more of a person first
Hillary Cole	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Divvy it up in all the areas we have talked about✓ Variety of housing options✓ Peer component is really powerful; Safe haven is peer run.✓ Person coming in to help: this happens for people with <i>physical</i> disabilities, not for people with <i>mental</i> disabilities.
Brian Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Flexible housing subsidy (until somebody gets Sec. 8). Housing subsidy must be adjusted to fair market rent annually.✓ Flexible support fund
Graham Parker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Variety✓ Group homes can be tremendously supportive✓ Transitional✓ Independent✓ Flexibility in funding✓ Flexibility of staffing
Jeff Rothenberg	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Build two more Safe Havens \$200,000✓ Add to Housing Contingency Fund \$210,000 (for a total of \$600,000)✓ Cost out Claude's idea (Barre Street)✓ Personal care attendant

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Shelter + Care ✓ Community care homes
Judy Rosenstreich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Subsidy (adjusted annually for market rent increases) ✓ Appropriate housing options to meet continuum of needs as recovery leads to independence
Joann Troiano	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Housing Contingency Fund—best because it's been used for all different situations
Morgan Brown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2/3 for housing Most of it in <u>independent</u> housing. ✓ 1/3 for supports and services
Claude Arsenault	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ concurs with others' thoughts ✓ work with area landlords to place a couple of people in each building so people can live independently ✓ home care providers based on matching interests

The group agreed to prepare for the next meeting on July 11 by writing down some information about various programs and funding sources to help build a framework for further analysis and evaluation. Judy asked Cathy Voyer to share a list of housing programs that she may have assembled for AHS.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m..

SUBMITTED BY: Judy Rosenstreich
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